

IN THE CLAIMS

1-58 (canceled)

59. (currently amended) A medical or surgical instrument comprising a biocompatible bioinert material selected from the group consisting of a YTZP ceramic, a ZTPA ceramic and silicon nitride, wherein the medical or surgical instrument does ~~will~~ not form iron particles during use.

60. (withdrawn) A medical or surgical instrument characterized in that it is coated with biocompatible bioinert material, wherein said biocompatible bioinert material is selected from the group consisting of silicon nitride, a YTZP ceramic and a ZTPA ceramic, wherein the medical or surgical instrument will not form iron particles during use.

61. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument according to claim 59, wherein the biocompatible bioinert material is a ZTPA ceramic.

62. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument according to claim 59, wherein the biocompatible bioinert material is silicon nitride.

63. (previously presented) A medical or surgical instrument according to claim 59, wherein the biocompatible bioinert material is a YTZP ceramic.

64. (previously presented) A medical or surgical instrument according to claim 59 in a form selected from the group consisting of a scalpel, scissors, a saw, a drill, a thread cutting tool, a centering tool, a drill-jig bushing and a templet.

65. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument of claim 64, wherein the instrument is in a form selected from the group consisting of scissors, a thread cutting tool, a centering tool, and a templet.

66. (previously presented) A tool made of biocompatible bioinert material selected from the group consisting of a YTZP ceramic, a ZTPA ceramic, and silicon nitride, wherein said tool will not form iron particles during use.

67. (previously presented) The tool according to claim 66, wherein the biocompatible bioinert material is a YTZP ceramic.

68. (withdrawn) The tool according to claim 66, wherein the biocompatible bioinert material is silicon nitride.

69. (withdrawn) The tool according to claim 66, wherein the biocompatible bioinert material is a ZTPA ceramic.

70. (previously presented) The tool according to claim 66, wherein the tool is formed as a scalpel, scissors, saw, drill, thread cutting tool, centering tool, drill-jig bushing or as a templet.

71. (previously presented) The tool according to claim 66, wherein said tool consists of the biocompatible bioinert material.

72. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument of claim 59, wherein the medical or surgical instrument consists of a ZTPA ceramic.

73. (withdrawn) The tool of claim 66, wherein the medical or surgical instrument consists of a ZTPA ceramic.

74. (withdrawn) A method comprising performing a medical procedure with a medical or surgical tool, sterilizing the tool, and reusing the medical or surgical tool in a subsequent procedure, wherein said medical or surgical tool comprises a biocompatible inert material that does not form iron particles during the medical or surgical procedure.

75. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 59, wherein said biocompatible bioinert material is a ZTPA ceramic.

76. (previously presented) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 59, wherein said instrument consists of said biocompatible bioinert material.

77. (previously presented) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 75, wherein said instrument consists of said biocompatible bioinert material.

78. (previously presented) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 63, wherein said instrument consists of said biocompatible bioinert material.

79. (currently amended) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 64 ~~63~~, wherein said instrument consists of said biocompatible bioinert material.

80. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 64, in the form of a centering tool.

81. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 64, in the form of a drill-jig bushing.

82. (withdrawn) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 64, in the form of a templet.

83. (previously presented) The medical or surgical instrument of Claim 59, wherein said use is a medical or surgical procedure.

84. (withdrawn) A method comprising cutting the bone of a patient with a surgical instrument comprising a biocompatible bioinert material wherein no iron particles are formed during said cutting.

85. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 84, wherein said surgical instrument is selected from the group consisting of a saw and a drill bit.

86. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 84, wherein said biocompatible inert material is a ceramic.

87. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 86, wherein said ceramic is a YTZP ceramic.

88. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 86, wherein said ceramic is a ZTPA ceramic.

89. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 84, wherein said bioinert material is provided as a coating on at least a portion of the instrument.

90. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 82, wherein said bioinert material is silicon nitride.

91. (withdrawn) A method comprising performing a surgical operation with a surgical instrument comprising a biocompatible bioinert ceramic material wherein no iron particles are formed during said surgical operations.